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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 000169

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AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE PASS TO AMEMBASSY MALABO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/08  
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SUBJECT: Sudan: Launch of the Nuba Mountains People's Forum

CLASSIFIED BY: Donald A. Blome, Minister Counselor, DoS, ECPO;  
REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

11. (C) Key Points:

-- Leaders of the Nuba community informed Embassy Cairo that they have created the International Permanent Forum for the Nuba Mountains Indigenous People (Nuba Forum) to protect and advocate for the rights of the Nuba people, which they believe are in danger under the NCP regime.

-- Cairo-based Nuba leaders are taking a cautious approach to registering local members of the Forum alleging evidence of surveillance.

-- The Forum is supporting SPLM presidential candidate Yasir Arman, but will boycott parliamentary elections because they believe the "incomplete census" disadvantages the Nuba people.

-- The Forum advocates for a unified, confederal Sudan, but accepts that secession will likely occur and is preparing to aggressively defend Nuba rights under any scenario.

-- The Forum would like S/E Gration to visit the Nuba Mountain region and meet with Nuba leaders.

12. (C) Comment: Uncertainty over the Nuba Mountain region has most of our Sudanese contacts worried that the region could become the next "flashpoint" for conflict in Sudan.

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Creation of Nuba Forum to Protect Nuba Rights  
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13. (C) SYG of the Nuba Forum Nour Elanbia Aburaida Shemaila (protect) and local Cairo leaders presented us with an announcement of the organization's creation on February 2. (Note: Shemaila is also a member of the SPLM National Secretariat. End Note). Shemaila informed us that Nuba representatives in Sudan, Australia,

Egypt, France, Kenya, Libya, Norway, Saudi Arabia and the United States had decided to create the Forum to protect and advocate for the rights of the Nuba people. He said the Forum's agenda is based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Shemaila said the Nuba Forum has officially opened offices in Norway, France and Sweden and plans to open offices in the near future in most of the aforementioned countries except Sudan and possibly Egypt, where Cairo office Treasurer Mojo Khalifa (protect) worried about "security concerns."

14. (C) Cairo Office Director of External Relations Mubarak Manakaden (protect) told us the Forum's goals are the recognition of the Nuba identity, the right to preserve and teach the Nuba language and culture, ensure that the Nuba people have ownership of land and local resources and the right to self-determination, which are in danger under the NCP regime. Shemaila said the model for the Nuba movement would be to obtain similar rights as the Aborigines have in present-day Australia.

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A Cautious Approach in Egypt  
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15. (C) Khalifa said the Cairo office of the Nuba Forum is working with the NGO Habitat International Coalition to organize seminars to raise the awareness of the Nuba people on their rights including land ownership and equality. However, Shemaila said the group has halted registration of new members in Egypt and alleged that its website was hacked and leadership phone calls were monitored. Khalifa believes the GoE is concerned about the Nuba Forum's activities because it could "stimulate the Nubian people in Egypt to ask for similar indigenous rights" and the Forum's activities could create instability in the Nuba Mountain region, which would threaten Egyptian peacekeepers deployed to UNMIS.

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Forum Supports Arman, Will Boycott Parliamentary Elections  
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16. (C) Shemaila stated that the Forum supports the presidential candidacy of SPLM Parliamentary Head Yasir Arman as "the last chance for unity." However, he said the Nuba Forum will boycott the parliamentary elections because a complete census did not take place among the Nuba people and the resulting distribution of parliamentary seats would not reflect the influence of the Nuba population of South Kordofan. According to Cairo office Information Spokesman Mohamed Gom'a Suliman (protect), the Nuba will only receive 2 of 10 parliamentary seats allotted to South Kordofan, but comprise approximately 60-70 percent of the population. He added that under the current parliamentary setup, the Nuba will have little say in the public consultations that could lead to self-determination.

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Desire for a United Sudan, Preparing for Conflict  
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17. (C) Despite fighting on the side of the SPLM in the last civil war, Shemaila told us that the Nuba people have historical ties to northern Sudan. He stated that because of this, the Forum supports a united Sudan with a decentralized, confederal system of governance that would grant the Nuba autonomy over the Nuba Mountains region. However, he told us that if the South secedes, the Nuba Forum will advocate for its right to self-determination, in which the Nuba people should decide whether to be independent, part of the North, or part of South Sudan. He stated that the denial of Nuba self-determination would create "another Darfur." Shemaila said the Nuba have "25,000-soldier army" at Al Abayad dedicated to protecting Nuba rights.

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S/E Gration Should Visit Nuba Mountains  
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18. (C) Shemaila contended that the Nuba Mountain region has been ignored by the USG. He encouraged S/E Gration to come to the region and meet with Nuba leaders. Shemaila said the Forum values and needs U.S. support in order to help it protect the Nuba's human rights.  
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